Mr. I. C. Chacko: The honourable member is well aware of the fact that the department is now taking up only the roads recommended by the Advisory Committee, of which the Honourable Member himself is a member, in the order in which they recommend to Government.

The question that Government be granted a sum of Rs. 55,03,560 under Demand No. VII - Public Works Department, was put to vote and carried.

The grant was made.

DEMAND No. VIII—ELECTRICITY AND TELEPHONE.

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon (*Electrical Engineer to Government*) : I move for a grant of Rs. 55,99,914 under Demand No. VIII—Electricity and Telephone.

Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar (*Vaikam, Kottayam and Changanachery* cum *Peermade*) : I have great pleasure to acknowledge the usefulness of the telephone service and to urge the necessity for further improving it. It was stated by the honourable member, Mr. Menon yesterday, that the electric charges of Kuttanad area are running into arrears, and that he finds it difficult to collect the same. I am afraid that there must be something wrong in the system of collection. Otherwise, there cannot be any arrears especially in view of the fact that the electric charges are, I believe, made a charge on the produce itself. I would suggest that, in order to avoid accumulation of arrears at least in future, the Government or the Department would see that at least 25 per cent.—

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: May I point out to the honourable member that the difficulties in collecting arrears in that area relate only to respective seasons of the year?

Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar: I am just coming to that. The arrears accumulating could be avoided if the Department could see that at least 25 per cent or even a larger percentage of the estimated charges are collected in advance as a kind of deposit before the actual operations commence.

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: Is the honourable member aware that all the cultivators are applying to Government for waiving advances?

Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar: It is a weakness on the part of Government to allow such arrears to accumulate, because, as a matter of fact, I know that even private contractors who take up contracts for pumping with the engines insist on the payment of an advance at the time of entering into the agreement. At any rate, it will be useful and helpful to insist upon a fair portion of the

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[Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar.]

amount being paid as advance to Government before the pumping operations commence. It may be done in instalment basis also, as is being done in the other case, at the rate of, say, 25 per cent before the pumping operations commence, 25 per cent at the middle of the period and the rest at other periods of the year. If such arrangements are made, it is quite possible to avoid arrears. It may be considered by Government whether it may not be useful to ask the Special Officer to constitute a committee to take up the bulk power in toto and to undertake the distribution of this and make the customers responsible to Government. Or, the Government must see that when the power is actually lent, the purchasers' solvency is enquired into properly or if the purchasers are not solvent, sureties may be insisted on to be given to the Government.

I have already indicated on a prior occasion about the usefulness and necessity of directing the electric lines and supplying power to a large number of estates in Peermade. Of course, it may be stated that the Electrical Engineer is considering the scheme. I am only suggesting the necessity of taking up the matter as early as possible.

Of course, it has been suggested and announced that large industries are being started, particularly the Chemicals industry. I understand that the site chosen for starting the factories is Kundara, on account of the reason, mainly, of the availability of cheap power.

President: The Honourable Member has omitted the question of the nearness to transport facilities and various other matters. The whole position is this. Certain interests, having considerable experience in the manufacture of chemicals and fertilisers, are being utilised by Government, and a Travancore company, with a large capital will be started for the purpose of utilising all possible means of bringing about a large influx of fertilisers and chemicals in the State. Now, the experts have been going round the country and they have seen various places and they have selected a place provisionally. That is where the matter stands.

Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar: Availability of cheap power is one of the main factors. And since one of the main processes is electrolysis, I would suggest that the Government may try the possibility of diverting the Papanasam power through South Travancore also.

President: Order, order. I wish we could get Papanasam power to be diverted to South Travancore. But it was with the greatest difficulty and after considerable negotiations with the Government of India, that the Government of India agreed to use their good offices with the Government of Madras so that, in order to enhance the

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production of Aluminium in the Aluminium Factory and of what may be called the fundamental purposes connected with the increase of food production, the Government of Madras would, for a stipulated period, sell us, so to say, 3,000 K. W of power from Papanasam. And that is for a limited period and for a particular purpose granted at the instance of the Government of India, in spite of the fact that the Government of Madras are not too anxious merely to give their surplus power to us for exploiting our own industries. The honourable member may have already seen indignant letters in the Press against the Government of Madras for being so spendthrifty of their electric power.

Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar: In that case, the Government may try the possibility of diverting the power from Pallivasal to South Travancore.

Mr. P. N. Nilakanta Pillai: I support the motion. I congratulate the Government and the Electrical Engineer for spreading electricity throughout the State and for inducing people more and more to use power for agricultural purposes. About the Telephone Department, I have to submit that in the Telephone Exchange at Quilon, there is no accommodation for customers to sit for a while sometimes, on account of the difficulty in getting the line clear for sending messages.

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: May I inform the honourable member that action has already been taken for providing accommodation in all exchange offices, in view of the fact that there are delays now.

Mr. P. N. Nilakanta Pillai: Care also should be taken to see that the operators behave more politely to customers. Recenly it so chanced that I went to the Quilon exchange. There the operator chose to behave a little indecently. I brought the matter to the Engineer in charge of the Telephone Department and I received a reply that the complaint is being enquired into. What happened to that enquiry I do not know. I think it would be better, as businessmen come to the exchange very often and the operators come in close contact with the customers that they behave better to them. In certain cases, on account of emergency or on account of difficulty in getting the lines clear, customers will have to wait for 20, 30 or even 40 minutes.

President: The honourable member must have been very lucky. Some of us have to wait for three or four hours sometimes.

Mr. P. N. Nilakanta Pillai: I am only talking about the behaviour of the operators. I hope everything will be done in the matter.

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Mr. A. T. S. Kaderbhoy: I also rise to support this motion. I also agree with my friend who spoke just now. The operators in Quilon are very indecent in their behaviour to customers and are impolitely asking "number" instead of "number please." When we ask for a number they will sometimes give incorrect number, so that when we get a number, we think it is the number that we want and begin to talk immediately. Then they will say 'This is the exchange'. Now, that is a lot of inconvenience to us. I would ask the Electrical Engineer to extend the telephone lines as far as practicable to all the towns in the State and other places, so that it may be convenient for the business men.

About two or three years ago, if I am not mistaken, I think the honourable member said that when the Pallivasal power becomes available, the charges for the current for ordinary uses will be reduced. So far, I think it has not been done. I suggest, if possible, it may be reduced by half or one anna per unit.

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: I will correct the honourable member that the present rates are even lower than the rates which the honourable member suggests.

Mr. A. T. S. Kaderbhoy: I think it is about 5 annas. I think it may be reduced to 4 as. provided the customers pay in time—I mean the current for lighting purposes. If they do not pay in time, of course, they may be asked to pay 5 as.

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: Let me first deal with the observations made by the honourable member Mr. Krishna Aiyar regarding the collection of dues. The rules and procedure regarding this are identically the same, whether in Kuttanad, Alleppey or in any other place. There is absolutely no difference. In fact, as I have already pointed out yesterday, we have had no difficulties in dealing with any other class of consumers.

With regard to the further extension of electric supply, I have already had several schemes sanctioned. But, unfortunately, due to the war, we have to keep all these works in abeyance. The import of materials for such extension is sanctioned by the Government of India only on certain conditions. The first is the maintenance of essential services of national importance. Secondly, they should have some bearing on food production or relate to any industry connected with the war. In the case of some extensions planned for the next year, I am glad to mention that we have a reasonable chance of getting the materials in time. Extension of the electric supply to the South of Trivandrum to cater to the needs of those areas will have to wait till the "main 66 K. V. extension" from Kundara to Trivandrum is completed. Till then, the supply of further power along the existing line is not possible.

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Mr. T. Krishna Pillai: How long will it take?

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: It depends on the release of the materials by the Government of India and His Majesty's Government. At present, the restriction in extending the scope of the supply is due to the limited power available from Pallivasal as the existing power has been fully utilized. Now that we are expecting a temporary supply from Papanasam, it will be possible for us to meet our immediate requirements for the Aluminium Factory, Punja pumping, Lift Irrigation and for some of the industries which are essential for food production.

The location of chemical industries is entirely decided by various factors. They should be located near the source of raw materials, and transport facilities, such as by rail, water and road, are essential. Kundara happens to be a suitable place for the location of a chemical factory. There are rail, canal, back-water and road facilities and to some extent, there is no congestion. Labour could be obtained from the neighbouring villages.

For the manufacture of synthetic manures, salt is not the raw material. It is not therefore necessary that the factory should be located near the salt pans in the south.

Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar: What about bleaching powder?

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: With regard to the location of a caustic soda factory also, Kundara again appears to be quite good for the purpose.

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi: May I ask the honourable member to give an assurance to this House that any industry in the State will be run by Travancoreans or the bulk of it will be run by Travancoreans?

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: That entirely depends on the response from the Travancore public in respect of the purchase of stores.

President: Till now, in all the industries sponsored by the Government, Travancoreans did not contribute less than 10 per cent. of the capital. The balance has been contributed by outsiders or made by the Government. In regard to important industries, the Government propose to take, as in the case of Ogale Glass Industry, 51 per cent. of the shares. If they get one per cent from the Travancore people, the industry will employ one per cent of Travancoreans. The Government are perfectly prepared to allow Travancoreans to take part in their industries. I am very glad to see that there is a departure in the Ogale Glass Works at Alwaye where we have taken a large number of shares. I trust the same will happen in respect of similar industries in the future.

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Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: I am sorry to hear the observations made by certain honourable members of the House regarding the unsatisfactory behaviour of certain operators. The complaints made by the honourable members will be investigated and the efficiency of telephone operators will be improved.

President: I think that the difficulty arises from the fact that the telephone operators do not quite understand the language. Practically five per cent of the operators alone understand English. They go on asking me to repeat the number twice or thrice. That is the real trouble. Their education of English language in the school and college is very poor.

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: While I do not attempt to defend my staff against the complaints made, I wish to point out in fairness to them that work in the Department has become heavy of late owing to the war, and it is quite possible that operators may become slack towards the fag end of their shift.

Mr. T. Krishna Pillai: The position might improve if an efficient operator is posted to supervise the work of the others.

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi: That leads us to enquire at what hours of the day the temper of the operators will be a little poised!

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: That is the matter of common sense.

President: I suppose the military calls engage the system practically all through the day.

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: The following statistics in this connection will probably be of interest to the honourable members. The external calls alone in 1116 were 15,000. In 1117, they went up to 35,000 and in 1118, so far, it is more than 65,000. This is mostly due to the military calls, to the exigencies of administration brought about by such essential problems as food, public health and to business interests which have a direct bearing on the war effort.

Mr. T. Krishna Pillai: May I ask the honourable member whether the number of girl operators would be increased?

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: As a matter of fact, we are trying to recruit more girl operators from next year, and the Public Service Commissioner's assistance is being sought for in this connection. But the present traffic condition is certainly abnormal, and we cannot make any plans for a large scale improvement based on present conditions. So, we have to carry

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on as best as we could with the materials and requirements available. But whenever it is found that the efficiency of the service is marred by particular operators, I shall take timely action to replace them by more experienced men.

With regard to the provision for telephone service in municipal areas I may state that already quite a large number of municipalities are in the telephone system.

Mr. A. T. S. Khaderbhoy: Is Shencottah one such?

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: Extension of Electric Supply from Papanasam to Kundara *via* Shencottah is already contemplated and side by side with this, arrangements will be made for the extension of the telephone service to Shencottah also.

Mr. T. Krishna Pillai: What about the demand for motors which has already increased?

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: If the Department gets applications from people who want them, I shall try and arrange for the purchase of sufficient stock. I cannot, however, buy and stock a large number of motors on the off-chance that somebody might turn up to purchase them. Most of the people who have already applied and paid for the motors have since received them.

Mr. T. Krishna Pillai: Have the Government been able to procure any to meet the present requirements, and to get the money in advance?

Rajyasevapravina K. P. Padmanabha Menon: We have done this as far as possible and supplies ordered in 1942 are gradually coming in now.

President: The question before the House is that the Government be granted a sum of Rs. 55,99,914 under Demand No. VIII—Electricity and Telephone.

The motion was put and carried.

The grant was made.

DEMAND IX—STATE TRANSPORT.

Mr. E. G. Salter: Sir, I beg to move the House for the grant of a sum of Rs. 32,21,863 under Demand IX—State Transport.

Mr M. Sultan Mohideen: (*Trivandrum and Nedumangad cum Chirayinkil*) മോട്ടാർ സ്പെയർപാർട്ട്സ്, ടയിൽ, പെട്രോൾ മുതലായവ കിട്ടാൻ വിഷമമായിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ സന്ദർഭത്തിൽ എത്രയും കാര്യക്ഷമമായി ട്രാൻസ്പോർട്ട്സർവീസ് നടത്തുന്ന ഡയറക്ടർ അവർകളെ അഭിനന്ദിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ഈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റിനെ

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